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2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE DEPUTY MINISTER

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN FOR MENTAL HEALTH

OMBUDSMAN FOR MENTAL HEALTH:
PEOPLE FIRST!

Public Services and Procurement Canada
Services publics et Approvisionnement Canada

Canada

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PSPC Internet site: http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/osm-omh/rapports-reports/2017-2018-eng.html

GCconnex: https://gcconnex.gc.ca/groups/profile/34614807/the-office-of-the-ombudsman-for-mental-health

GCpedia: http://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/Bureau_de_l%27ombudsman_de_la_sant%C3%A9_mentale?setlang=en&uselang=en

Catalogue N°: P1-37E-PDF

THE FIRST YEAR IN BRIEF

THE FIRST YEAR IN BRIEF

87
PRESENTATIONS
to more than
2,500
EMPLOYEES

MORE THAN
400
CONFIDENTIAL MEETINGS

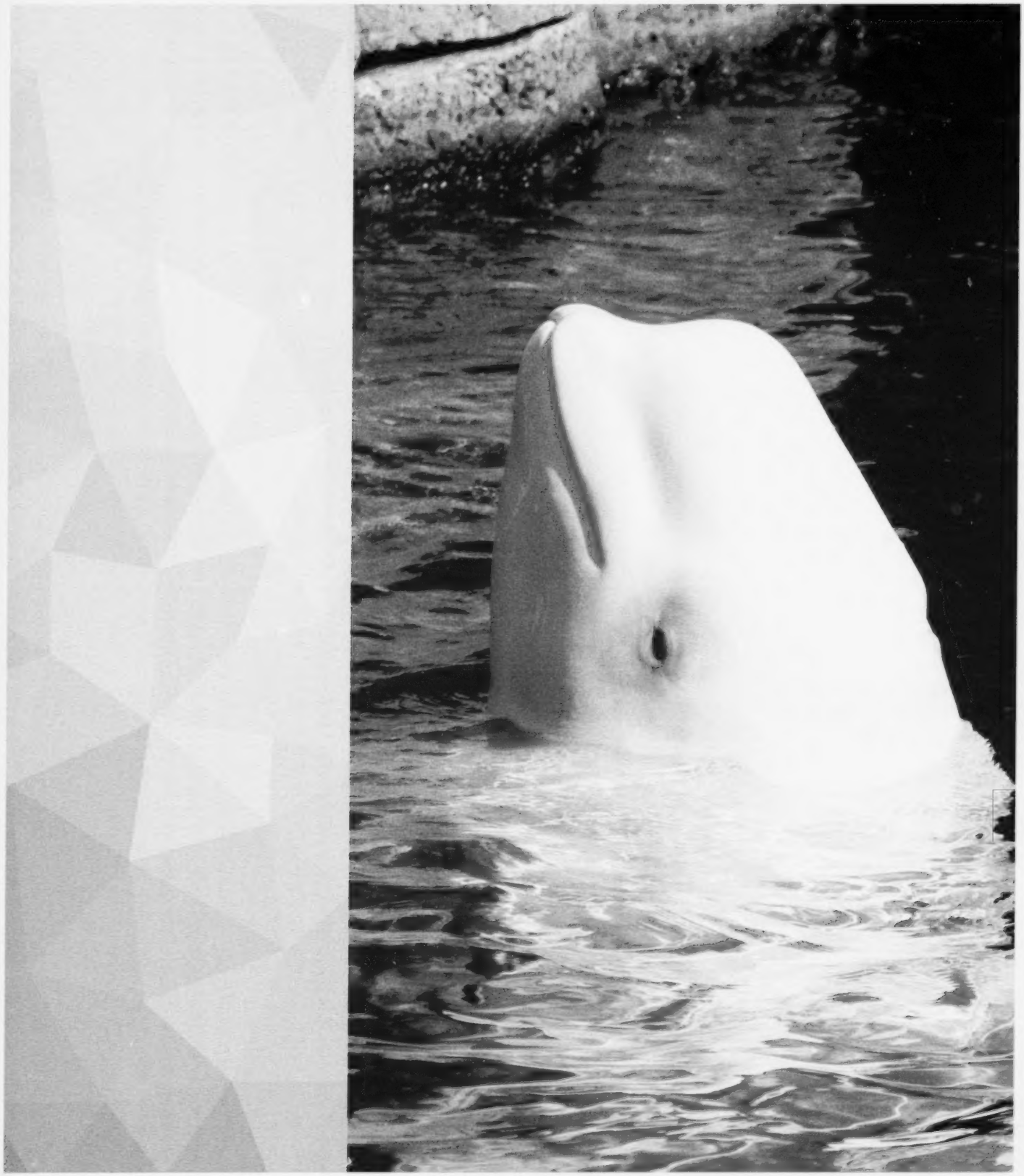
17
REGIONAL VISITS

16
CONSULTATIONS
with various public service, private sector and university stakeholders

4
PARTNERSHIPS
established with researchers, universities and federal organizations

4
WORKPLACE ASSESSMENTS[1]
recommended informally to senior management

[1] The workplace assessment is conducted by a third party to identify points of contention and sources of conflict within an organization, and to consider potential solutions. The primary objective of the assessment is to improve the workplace environment.



REPORT SUMMARY

The annual report of the Office of the Ombudsman for Mental Health (the Office) of Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) sets out its activities for the period from February 6, 2017, to March 31, 2018. A first report was published on September 21, 2017.

OBJECTIVES

This report has three objectives:

1. **Provide an overview of the situation at PSPC** based on the Ombudsman's findings further to meetings and consultations with employees and from various sources of information;
2. **Make additional recommendations for improvement** while reporting on achievements; and
3. **Outline the Office's main projects and activities** to further support departmental and federal workplace well-being and mental health commitments.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

The issues identified by the Ombudsman in the first report[2] remain primary concerns of many employees. There are other behaviours or factors that can lead to mental health issues in the workplace, including:

1. incivility;
2. harassment, bullying and lack of respect;
3. favouritism, lack of fairness and transparency; and
4. workload and stress levels at work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the **eight recommendations**[3] included in the first report, the Ombudsman is presenting **three new recommendations** based on his observations and on the requests of employees across the country:

1. In collaboration with employees, within branches and regions, **develop tools promoting civility and respect in the workplace;**
2. Through mechanisms available to the Department, **consider introducing a clause**, or alternate means, **allowing employees to report the inappropriate, harassing or aggressive behaviours** of co-workers, clients, partners or suppliers; and
3. **Systematically offer the On-boarding and Orientation Program for New Employees and Students** throughout the Department and add the **"psychological health"** component to the mandatory occupational health and safety course.

[2] In the first report, the Ombudsman stated that some behaviours can lead to the onset of mental health issues in the workplace or aggravate an existing issue, including the following: lack of communication, trust and empathy, primarily in the employer-employee relationship; lack of courtesy and respect, primarily in the employer-employee relationship; and the impact of organizational changes on employees.

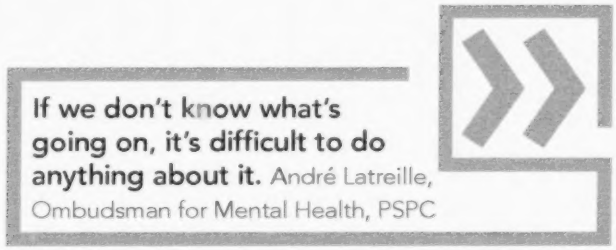
[3] In the first report the Ombudsman made eight recommendations grouped in three categories: **leadership** (1. review recruitment, development and assessment practices for supervisors, managers and executives, with a focus on people management; **work environment** (2. conduct exit interviews systematically; 3. assess the impact of departmental transformation projects on employees' mental health; 4. conduct a psychological risk profile evaluation; 5. appoint regional well-being coordinators; 6. recommendations for the Miramichi Pay Centre); **training and recognition** (7. provide mental health training to employees, particularly to management; 8. introduce a Mental Health Award of Excellence).

THE OFFICE PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Office initiated various projects and activities, including:

1. Numerous **communication and outreach activities** to educate employees on the importance of promoting and protecting mental health;
2. The development of a **series of three mental health surveys;**
3. The development of a **mental health performance measurement tool,** through which departments and agencies will be able to measure and report on their mental health performance in a coordinated manner;
4. The establishment of an **Interdepartmental Organizational Ombudsmen Committee;** and
5. The creation of an **honour roll** showcasing inspiring employees who strive to make a positive contribution to mental health at PSPC.

These projects will continue in 2018–2019, and employees will be regularly informed of recent developments to keep them abreast of the status of projects.



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 MESSAGE FROM THE OMBUDSMAN FOR MENTAL HEALTH

February 6, 2018, marked the first anniversary of the establishment of the Office of the Ombudsman for Mental Health (the Office). This first year was defining and unique for the Department in terms of its willingness to create and maintain healthy and safe workplaces. By creating the Office, the Department strengthened its leadership role on the mental health front within the federal public service. The establishment of the Office was well received by many employees.

Throughout the year, I met with you to take stock of the situation. I admired the openness with which you spoke about mental health and your desire to improve our workplace. In my annual report, I make recommendations tailored to our reality in order to ensure workplaces put people first in all they do.

I can see that senior management is genuinely committed to addressing the issues raised by the Office by conducting workplace assessments, taking immediate corrective action or seeking advice and guidance from the Office. By properly equipping our employees, supervisors, managers and executives, we will be able to respond more quickly and efficiently.

I have seen an increasing number of employees, alone or in groups, coming to my office to express their concerns, frustrations and unease about the abusive, aggressive or harassing behaviour of co-workers, managers and clients both within and outside the Department. Collectively, they have exposed these inappropriate behaviours, and they expect the organization to listen to them and take action.

I would also like to mention that several managers called on the Office for people management advice and guidance and to validate approaches they were considering to support employees in difficulty. Others have consulted me to seek advice on how to act with employees experiencing mental health issues, either personally or professionally, who did not want to talk openly about them or consult a health care professional. Often, in such cases, managers do not know how to help employees who are struggling and do not feel as if they are doing enough to support the rest of the team. Managers have often expressed the need for more practical tools.

On another note, I am pleased to see that our departmental leadership in mental health has been noticed within the public service. Indeed, several federal organizations are considering following in our footsteps and creating their own office of the ombudsman. I am proud of how the Office contributes to cultural change within our Department and the public service in the area of mental health.

I would also like to recognize the work of the Psychological Health and Safety Working Group, which developed PSPC's first-ever Mental Health Strategy, approved in October 2017 by the Deputy Minister's executive committee. This strategy reminds us that we all have a role to play to protect mental health and ensure a safe and healthy work environment.

Standing (left to right): Nicholas Radzichowsky, Kia Goutte, André Latreille (the Ombudsman) and Nélia Medeiros
Seated (left to right): Valentina Fumagalli and Danielle Caron

I invite you to read this annual report, which is intended as a snapshot of the work accomplished by a small, terrific team, to whom I say a huge thank you.

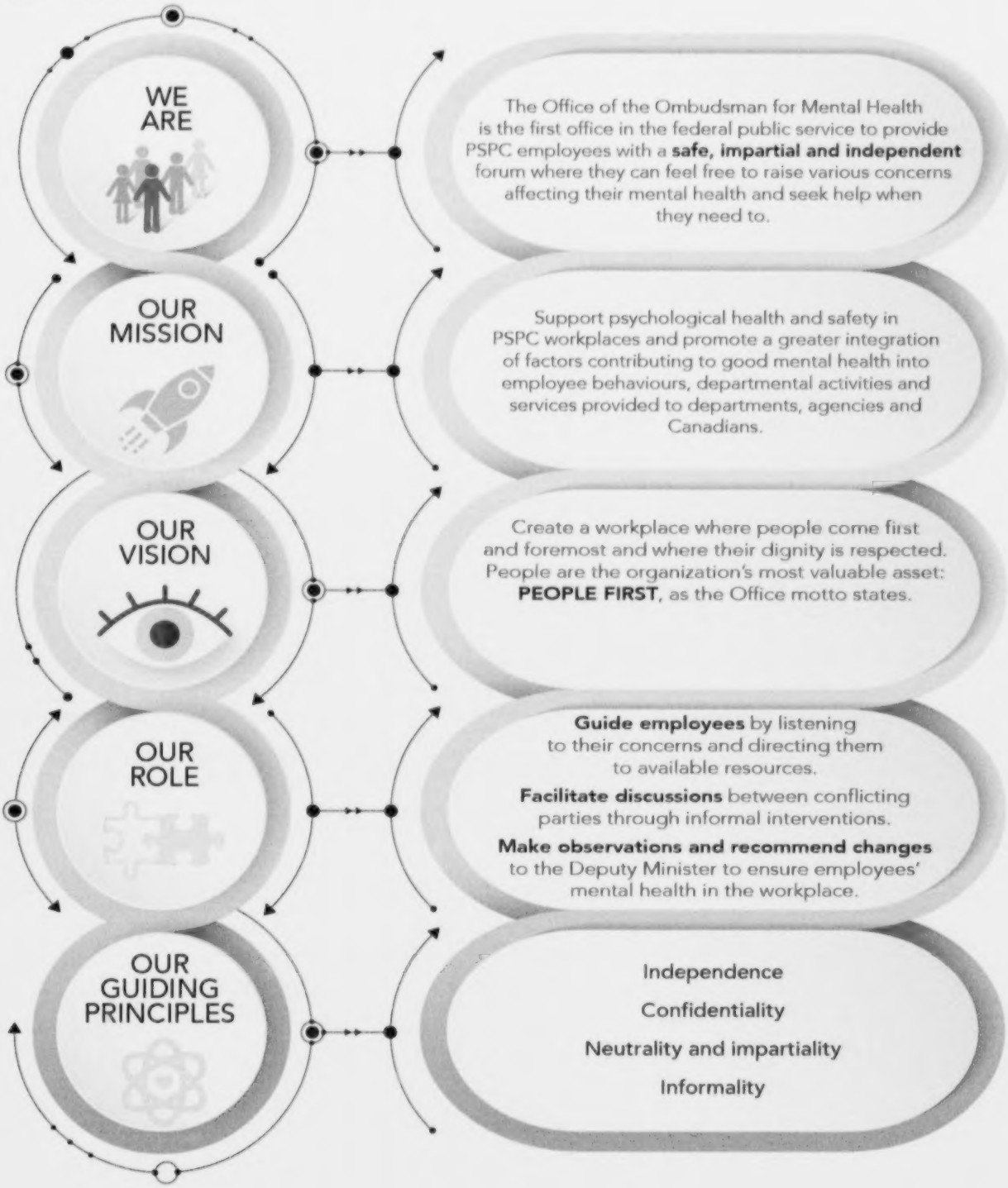
Keep following us on our various platforms and participating in discussions!

Happy reading!

André Latreille

1.2 ABOUT THE OFFICE

In early 2017, Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) strengthened its organizational support system for mental health and well-being by creating the position of Ombudsman for Mental Health.

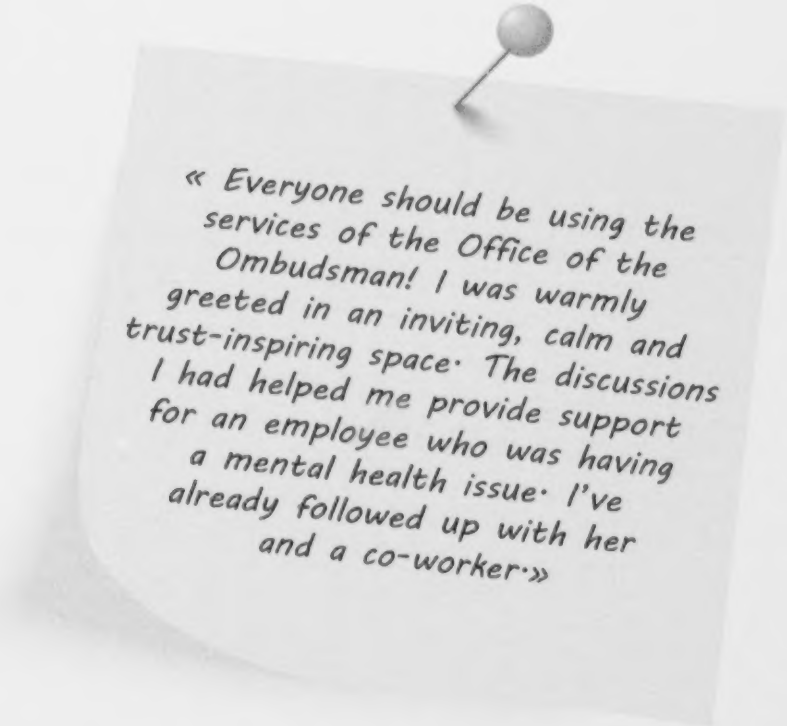

WE ARE
The Office of the Ombudsman for Mental Health is the first office in the federal public service to provide PSPC employees with a **safe, impartial and independent** forum where they can feel free to raise various concerns affecting their mental health and seek help when they need to.
OUR MISSION
Support psychological health and safety in PSPC workplaces and promote a greater integration of factors contributing to good mental health into employee behaviours, departmental activities and services provided to departments, agencies and Canadians.
OUR VISION
Create a workplace where people come first and foremost and where their dignity is respected. People are the organization's most valuable asset: **PEOPLE FIRST**, as the Office motto states.
OUR ROLE
Guide employees by listening to their concerns and directing them to available resources.
Facilitate discussions between conflicting parties through informal interventions.
Make observations and recommend changes to the Deputy Minister to ensure employees' mental health in the workplace.
OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES
Independence
Confidentiality
Neutrality and impartiality
Informality

2 OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION

2.1 CONFIDENTIAL MEETINGS

Throughout the first year, the Ombudsman held a number of confidential meetings with employees from all groups and levels. During these meetings, some people reported behaviours and practices that go against the key leadership competencies and principles set out in the PSPC Code of Conduct and the Government of Canada's Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector. Others made suggestions to improve our workplace. It is important to note that few employees met with the Ombudsman to discuss Phoenix-related pay issues, although many mentioned having compensation issues.

The Ombudsman observes that communication and sharing should be the norm within our workplaces. Creating an environment where workplace concerns are addressed is fundamental to protecting the mental health of employees, preventing conflict and ensuring success for both employees and the organization.


« Everyone should be using the services of the Office of the Ombudsman! I was warmly greeted in an inviting, calm and trust-inspiring space. The discussions I had helped me provide support for an employee who was having a mental health issue. I've already followed up with her and a co-worker.»

OVER

400

CONFIDENTIAL MEETINGS

69%

WOMEN VERSUS

31%

MEN

23%

MANAGERS VERSUS

77%

EMPLOYEES*

*The manager-employee ratio at PSPC is 20%–80%.

2.2 REGIONAL VISITS

The vast majority of meetings were held in the offices located in Gatineau, Quebec. Others were held during regional visits across Canada and outside government buildings, at the request of employees.

These visits are vitally important activities that provide an opportunity to speak with employees across the organization. When there is an immediate need, one on one telephone sessions are organized.

The regional visits allowed the Ombudsman to visit more remote locations and meet engaged employees such as the following:

LANGLEY
(the Ombudsman with the GCSurplus staff)

- The maintenance team at the Joseph-A. Ghiz Building in Summerside, Prince Edward Island;
- The team responsible for maintaining the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Centre in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador; and
- Some of the employees responsible for the Sydney Tar Ponds Project and the remediation of dozens of former coal mine sites in Nova Scotia.

The following map indicates the cities visited by the Ombudsman for Mental Health and the ones he will visit in the coming months:

CALGARY
(the Ombudsman near the Wonderland sculpture in Calgary)

- **Office of the Ombudsman for Mental Health**
- **Cities visited**
- **Cities to visit**

« I am so impressed that you are taking the time to meet people from across the country to make PSPC a better place for all of us. More so, I really do feel as though you've not just heard me but really listened. »

MIRAMICHI
(the Ombudsman and one of his advisors at the Public Service Pay Centre in Miramichi)

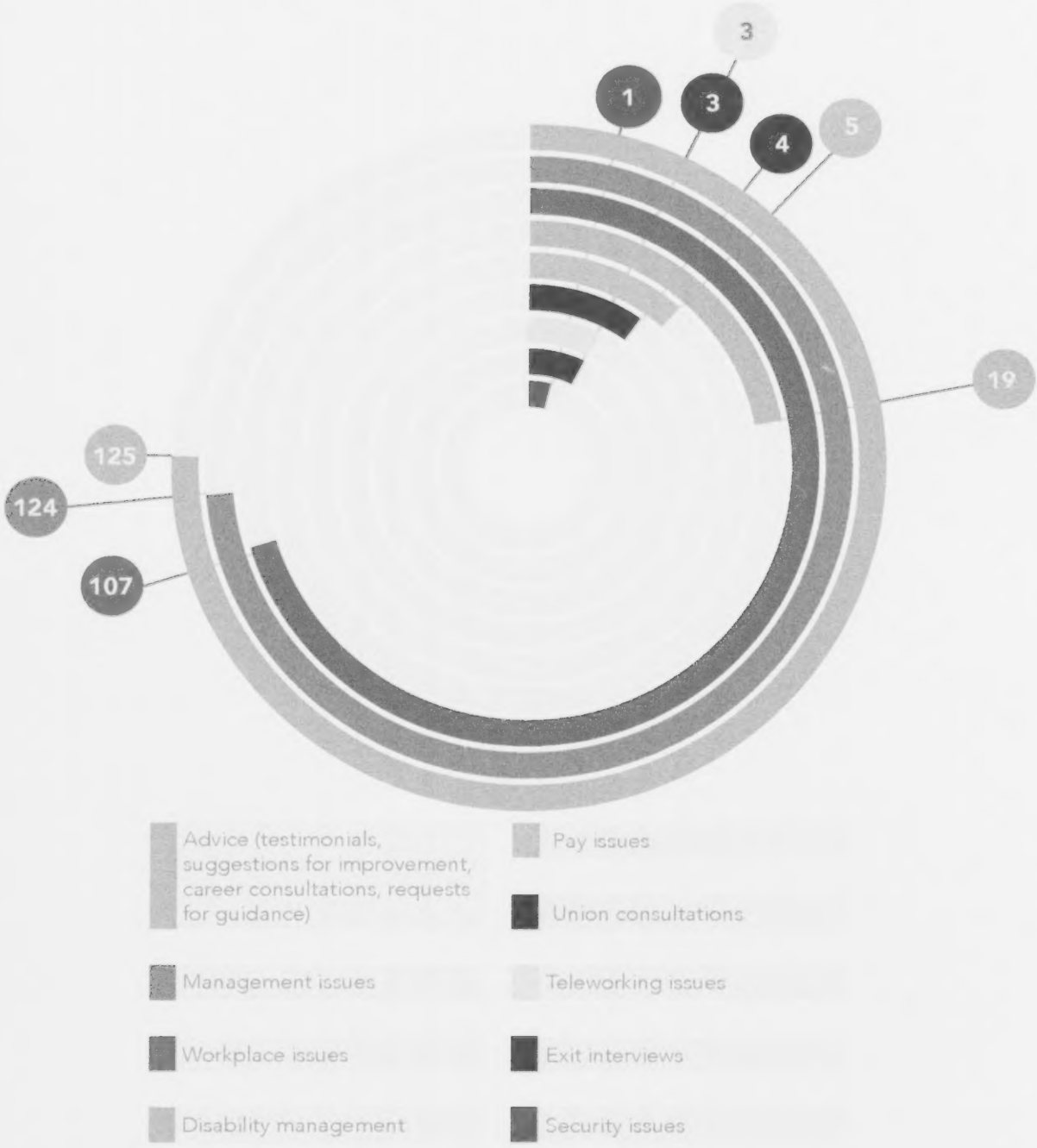
SUMMERSIDE
(the Ombudsman at the Joseph A. Ghiz Building in Summerside, with the technical facility manager and the acting provincial director, Prince Edward Island.)

SHEDIAC
(photos taken by Government of Canada Pension Centre staff in Shediac showing what Canada means to them)

TORONTO
(the Ombudsman at a presentation to members of the Ontario Managers Network and the Harassment Advisory Panel)

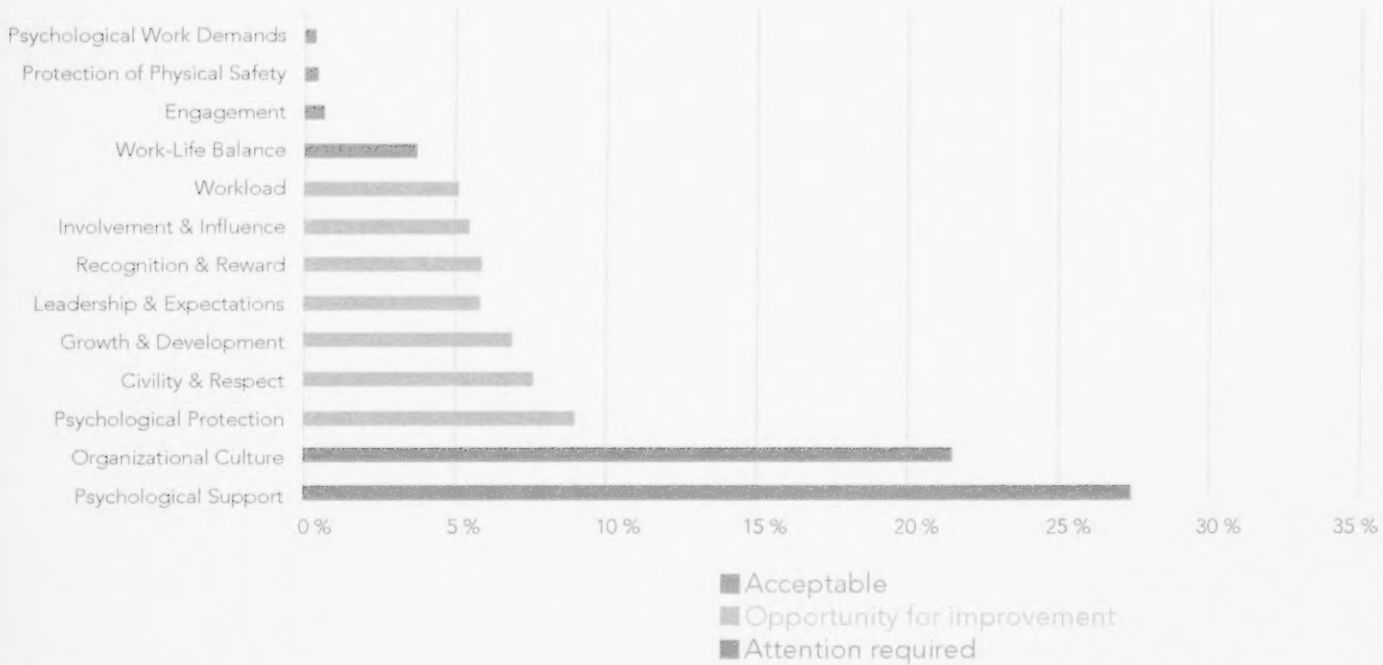
2.3 REASONS FOR MEETINGS

Employees are making their voices heard, allowing the Office, and the organization as a whole, to better understand their concerns. There are many reasons for requesting a meeting, as shown in the following graph.



Each meeting with the Ombudsman was categorized based on the **psychosocial factors** outlined in the *Guarding Minds at Work* tool and in the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace. These are risk factors related to working conditions that can cause psychological health issues. The factors include how the work is performed (deadlines, workload, and work methods) and the context in which it takes place (including relationships and interactions with supervisors, co-workers and clients).

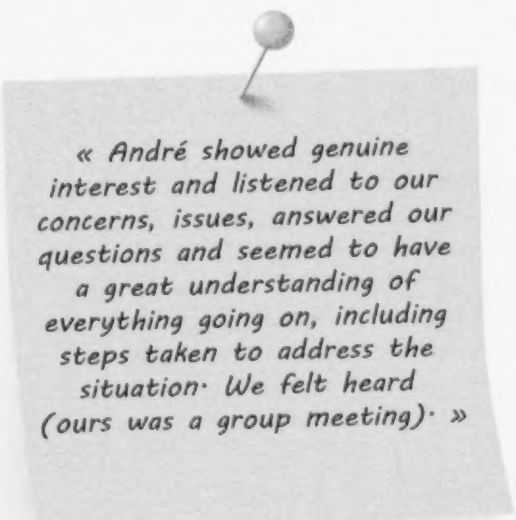
The chart below shows the areas in which the Department should pay closer attention.



2.4 INTERVENTIONS

The Ombudsman met with several employees who wanted assistance using an informal and anonymous approach rather than—out of fear of reprisals or the impact it might have on their careers—going through formal channels. It should be noted that the procedure for filing a formal complaint and the processing time required can be difficult for complainants who do not feel psychologically prepared to undertake such a process. This is another argument in support of using informal actions and the Office's services.

The Ombudsman's interventions took many forms, ranging from recommending workplace assessments to individual interventions.


« André showed genuine interest and listened to our concerns, issues, answered our questions and seemed to have a great understanding of everything going on, including steps taken to address the situation. We felt heard (ours was a group meeting). »

Here are some examples:

- On a few occasions, the Ombudsman met with senior managers to inform them of issues that had been raised by their respective groups or of ineffective behaviour on the part of managers and supervisors. In a few cases, workplace assessments were conducted by the human resources and management drew up action plans with employees based on identified deficiencies. In addition, discussions were held with the managers concerned and resulted in concrete assistance measures, such as coaching or 360° evaluations.
- On several occasions, the Ombudsman intervened to make management aware of specific situations in order to improve a person's day-to-day routine and mental health in the workplace. These actions were intended to reduce any stigmatization that might result from disclosure of the employee's personal situation and focused on:
  - access to telework (unequal application of the telework guidelines);
  - returning to work after a long absence;
  - the professional isolation that some employees may feel; and
  - disrespectful tone of voice and words used by supervisors.

2.5 OBSERVATIONS: What the Ombudsman found

In his first report covering the first 6 months of operation, the Ombudsman stated that some behaviours can cause mental health issues in the workplace or aggravate existing issues. These behaviours include:

1. Lack of communication, trust and empathy, primarily in the employer-employee relationship; and
2. Lack of courtesy and respect, primarily in the employer-employee relationship.

The Ombudsman also found that organizational changes can have a significant impact on employees.

A number of measures have been implemented since the first report was published (see **Appendix A**). The culture change advocated in PSPC's Mental Health Strategy (see **Appendix B**) can be achieved through various means: **awareness** of the importance of mental health; **adequate training** that specifically deals with challenges facing employees; **accommodation** for employees with mental health issues; and **healthy and open communication** on a daily basis.

To ensure that the strategy is successfully implemented, it is also important that branch and region specific action plans be developed and that tools be made available to employees. The mental health champions, who are part of PSPC Psychological Health and Safety Working Group, have initiated some of the work related to developing action plans in collaboration with colleagues from their respective branch or regions.

Moreover, it is essential that: sources of stress in the workplace be identified; that strategies be developed with employees to mitigate and prevent them; and, that behaviours that could lead to psychological injuries be dealt with.

In recent months, thousands of victims of sexual assault and harassment have spoken out on social networks. A wave of #metoo, #moiaussi and #yotambién hashtags swept across various platforms around the world, symbolizing a powerful movement of people in solidarity denouncing such behaviour. This surge in denouncing behaviours allowed victims to tell their stories publicly, to break the silence and to overcome isolation. It has also opened society's eyes to a phenomenon whose extent had been unknown.

Closer to home, in the Department, the extent of media attention may have given some employees the courage to talk about mental health issues. In fact, an increasing number of employees have turned to the Ombudsman, alone or in groups, to report unacceptable workplace behaviours that go against the spirit of coming to terms with psychosocial factors. However, while the #metoo movement denounced inappropriate sexual behaviours, PSPC employees mainly spoke out against unacceptable behaviour: incivility,

« I didn't realize the extent to which what I told you had weighed on me. To be able to verbalize what I was feeling to a person I trusted was very liberating. »

psychological harassment, bullying, lack of respect, aggressive behaviour, belittlement, favouritism or unfair treatment. In a similar vein, recent reports by Joe Friday, Public Sector Integrity Commissioner of Canada, also show that management must deal with the above mentioned behaviours, particularly when employees report them to the organization.

Since surveys are anonymous, it is sometimes difficult to fully understand the situations employees are going through. Because the Ombudsman guarantees confidentiality, he can find out more about employee concerns. The following observations therefore reflect what the Ombudsman heard and noted in confidential sessions during the first year of Office operations. These observations must be interpreted with caution.

PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS – Psychological support[4] and organizational culture[5]

1. FAVOURITISM, LACK OF FAIRNESS AND TRANSPARENCY

In the second half of 2017, an increasing number of cases involving lack of transparency and fairness in staffing processes were reported to the Ombudsman for Mental Health. This trend had not been observed in the first six months. During numerous meetings held in the third and fourth quarters, many employees raised the issue of favouritism and the constant turnover of team leaders, supervisors and managers in some places.

For acting appointments, the selection of candidates is not always perceived to be based on the employee's record, skills, experience or desire to be considered for acting assignments or appointments. Employees have also complained about the excessive use of acting appointments (up to seven years in some cases), lengthy staffing processes (sometimes longer than 18 months) and positions that remain vacant for long periods. In such cases, the remaining employees must take on a heavier workload and more tasks could lead to stress, anxiety and psychological distress.

On the other hand, the Department is a leader in terms of flexible work arrangements (telework, flexible schedules, compressed work schedules) and stands out from the rest of the federal public service by six percentage points in the results of the 2017 Public Service Employee Survey (PSES), (86% of PSPC respondents find that their immediate supervisors support the use of flexible work arrangements).

Flexible work arrangements help employees achieve work-life balance and promote the effective use of work hours. Working remotely, whether in government offices or at home, is also allowed. An increasing number of managers and directors work in a different physical location than that of their employees.

Several employees have indicated that this reality should be taken into account in staffing processes and that areas of selection should not be limited to specific regions or physical workplaces.

[4] **Psychological support**, one of the 13 psychosocial factors set out in the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace, is demonstrated when co-workers and supervisors in a workplace are concerned about the mental and psychological health of employees and respond appropriately.

[5] **Organizational culture**, one of the 13 psychosocial factors, is demonstrated when a workplace is characterized by trust, honesty and fairness.

2. IMPACT OF VARIOUS TRANSFORMATION PROJECTS ON EMPLOYEES' MENTAL HEALTH

With regards to the impact of various transformations on the mental health of employees, the Ombudsman has received indications that are in line with his observations in the first report. Employees are not always clear on the effectiveness of transformations. Indeed, employee feedback is not always sought in the initial development and design phases, or, when it is, their feedback is not always taken into account.

In addition, technology is seen as a way of facilitating work and reducing turnaround times. However,it is not always effective and, often, system issues arise that should not be underestimated.

Furthermore, it is important that employees receive replacement equipment in a timely manner in the event that their assigned hardware malfunctions. For example, it can take several weeks, and, in some cases, months to replace an employee's defective laptop or cell phone. These delays can have an impact on productivity and performance as well as affect the employee's stress levels.

Renouvellement du milieu de travail *de SPAC*

Workplace **Renewal** *at PSPC*

Currently, projects are being implemented across the country as a part of the Workplace Renewal Initiative. As the number of workplaces affected by this renewal increases, so do employee concerns, particularly in regional offices where the initiative is well-advanced. It is becoming increasingly clear that not having assigned work stations requires adjustment. Some employees are still trying to figure out how they can work effectively in their new workplace—a situation that could contribute to increasing anxiety. When questions are left unanswered and performance expectations remain the same, problems arise, leading to anxiety.

Employees would like to receive more information, be more involved in the decision-making process, see future work spaces to get a better idea of their new workplace, and speak with employees who went through the same change. For example, the fit-up of the new PSPC offices in Montreal shows that it is possible to have a successful transformation.

Some managers are concerned about the projects being undertaken as part of the initiative from a mental health perspective. They are hoping for a successful renewal, but do not exactly know how to identify symptoms of stress in employees (changes in behaviour or mood, fatigue, lack of interest or disengagement), especially employees who work off-site owing to telework or flexible work arrangements. Managers want to know if there is a strategy in place to monitor the impact of the Workplace Renewal Initiative on employees' mental health.

Other employees, particularly those in the Vanguard Network, have expressed positive feedback about the Initiative. In some regions, measures have been implemented to help employees adapt to the new work spaces. Here are some examples:

- Creation of a GCconnex page providing information on the ***Workplace Experience Lab***, a prototype lab space for the new offices in Vancouver;
- Development of a **digital toolkit** to help employees in the Pacific Region navigate through the changes and facilitate discussions about mental health from a workplace renewal perspective; and

Generally, employees feel that more effort should be made to build up team spirit, because the sense of belonging to a team can be affected by an increased number of teleworkers and the physical absence of co-workers.

Best practice

Additional training sessions on managing employees remotely should be given serious consideration in order to prevent having an isolated and disengaged workforce and benefit from mobile work solutions.

MONTREAL 2018:
A TIME OF MOURNING AND A NEW BEGINNING

The new PSPC offices in Montreal were fitted up in mid-January 2018. This is the first office refit of this magnitude within the Department, and it involved 380 employees. There was a tremendous amount of logistics and coordination work over several years. The chair of Vanguard, PSPC's Young Professionals Network, even created a **blog** in which she shares her impressions of this transition to a modern workplace. While acknowledging the bereavement she felt when she had to leave her workspace after so many years, she enthusiastically embraced this major change. Some of the factors that facilitated the success of the transition were clear-cut instructions provided during the move, consultations, and the involvement of employees who were able to express themselves and whose suggestions were overall taken into account.

New PSPC offices in Montreal

3. INCIVILITY[6]

The meetings and consultations held by the Ombudsman confirm that disrespectful words and behaviours have a significant impact on the psychological health of Department employees.

Those targeted by disrespectful words or behaviours may react by being uncivil in turn or by taking revenge against the person who did or said hurtful things or by turning in on themselves and keeping it all inside. Like the ripples created when a pebble is thrown in the water, lack of civility spreads through the workplace. The ripple effect is the most disturbing and common effect of incivility.

The image on the next page[7] shows examples of civil and uncivil behaviour in the workplace.

When nothing is done to stop incivility, an organizational culture is created that normalizes and accepts these behaviours and encourages victims to refrain from complaining and to suffer in silence. Bear in mind that when one person is uncivil to another employee, the victim suffers, as do those around him or her.

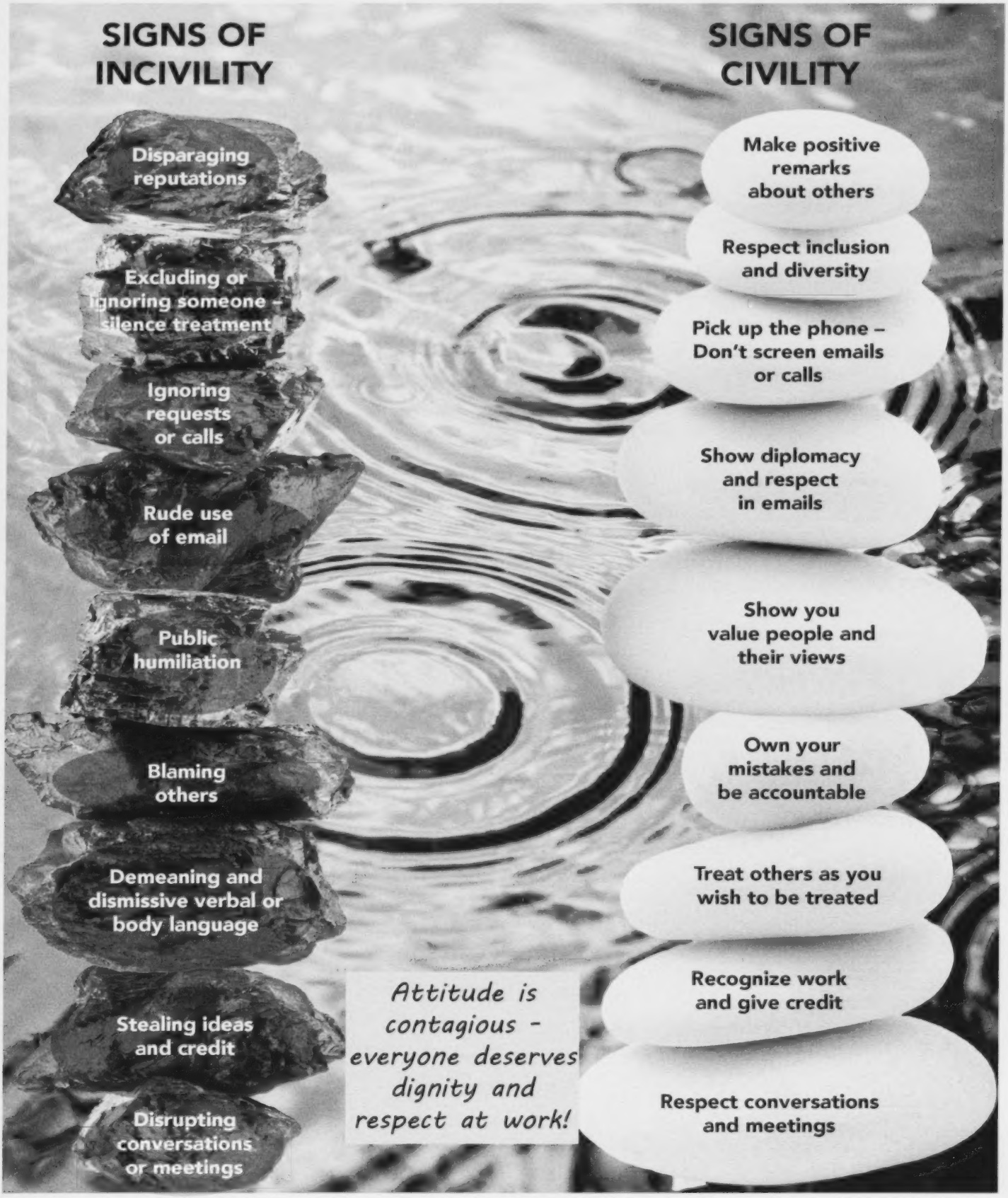
The impact of a lack of civility on the people subjected to it varies depending on the person, the type of behaviour and especially the frequency of the behaviour. The diagram in **Appendix C** shows the known effects of lack of civility.

Attitude is contagious, and we all have a role to play in creating psychologically healthy workplaces

Best practice

To address incivility issues in the workplace, it is essential to educate employees about incivility and the reasons behind it. Similarly, self-awareness and a willingness to look at one's own behaviour are crucial. Highlighting bad behaviour and speaking out will help improve the situation at PSPC described in the Association of Professional Executives of the Public Service of Canada (APEX) survey and the 2017 PSES.

[6] Workplace **incivility** refers to those seemingly insignificant behaviours that are rude, disrespectful, discourteous or insensitive, where the intent to harm is ambiguous or unclear (definition by Sharone Bar David, Consultant in Solutions for Respectful Workplaces).
[7] See the bibliography at the end of the report for the complete list of documentary sources consulted to create the image.


SIGNS OF INCIVILITY
Disparaging reputations
Excluding or ignoring someone – silence treatment
Ignoring requests or calls
Rude use of email
Public humiliation
Blaming others
Demeaning and dismissive verbal or body language
Stealing ideas and credit
Disrupting conversations or meetings
SIGNS OF CIVILITY
Make positive remarks about others
Respect inclusion and diversity
Pick up the phone – Don't screen emails or calls
Show diplomacy and respect in emails
Show you value people and their views
Own your mistakes and be accountable
Treat others as you wish to be treated
Recognize work and give credit
Respect conversations and meetings
Attitude is contagious - everyone deserves dignity and respect at work!

4. HARASSMENT[7], BULLYING[8] AND LACK OF RESPECT

Harassment can be the result of unresolved and escalating uncivil behaviour. Recent 2017 PSES findings indicate that 16% of employees believe that they have experienced harassment in the workplace in the past two years, particularly from supervisors or co-workers—down slightly from 2014 (18%) and slightly lower than for the public service as a whole (18%).

Harassment is a factor contributing to the risk of violence in the workplace and must be dealt with promptly and appropriately. Tougher legislation has also been proposed recently to combat harassment and sexual violence in the workplace as part of Bill C-65, which will amend the Canada Labour Code.

Front-line employees who provide services to clients internally or externally also stated that they are not treated properly by their clients, who are not respectful or courteous to them. Unfortunately, some employees are not adequately supported by their immediate manager, who sometimes sides with the client in order to provide the best possible service in accordance with the departmental client service strategy framework. These employees strive to find a compromise between client expectations and those of their immediate manager or their client's manager while having their own need for respect met. In addition, the Department does not clearly communicate expected behaviours to clients. This said, these expectations for PSPC employees are clearly set out in the Department's Code of Conduct.

DID YOU KNOW?

If you are unsure whether an action or situation constitutes harassment, discrimination or disrespectful behaviour, you can seek advice and guidance from resources, such as the following:

- the National Harassment Prevention Coordinator (819 420 1577 for all regions, except Quebec for which the number to call is 514 824 5527);
- a labour relations or ethics advisor;
- an immediate manager; or
- a union representative.

[7]According to the Policy on Harassment Prevention and Resolution, "Harassment is any improper conduct by an individual that is directed at and offensive to another individual in the workplace, including at any event or any location related to work, and that the individual knew or ought reasonably to have known would cause offence or harm. It comprises any objectionable act, comment or display that demeans, belittles, or causes personal humiliation or embarrassment, and any act of intimidation or threat. Harassment is normally a series of incidents, but it can be one severe incident that has a lasting impact on the individual."

[8]According to the Mental Health Commission citing Alberta Human Services, bullying is a hostile, conscious, deliberate and repeated act marked by power inequality, intent to do harm or threats of aggression.

PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTOR – Workload management

5. WORKLOAD AND STRESS LEVEL AT WORK

During meetings held by the Ombudsman, it was frequently mentioned that the already heavy workload was made worse by a lack of resources and long, often inefficient staffing processes. This contributes to stress in the workplace and affects employees' work habits and mental health. In such circumstances, employees take fewer breaks, work during lunch hours and do not participate in social activities. Employees are also finding it increasingly difficult to read emails sent by the organization, attend meetings and take training.

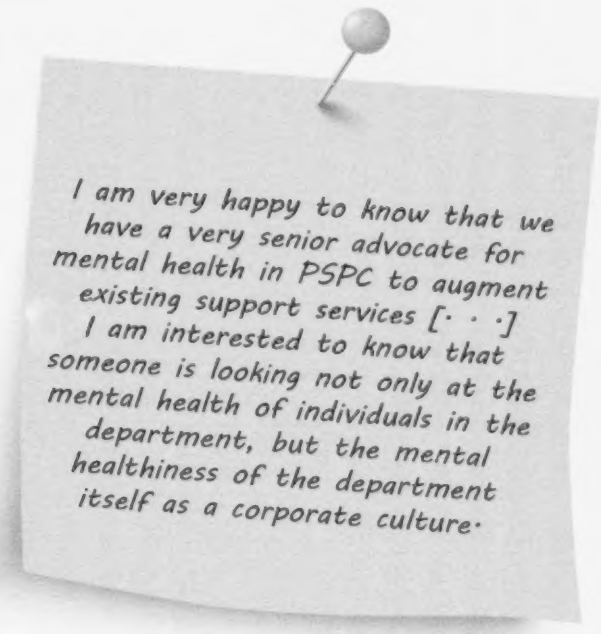
The APEX survey and the 2017 PSES indicate that PSPC employees are proud of their work (85% of executives and 86% of employees as a whole). Several employees even said they had "PSPC tattooed on their hearts." They are dedicated to their work, despite having to deal with increasingly more demanding professional requirements and high levels of stress related to an ever-increasing workload in a context of greater accountability (according to the 2017 PSES, 42% of respondents find that the heavy workload causes them stress).

« I was initially concerned as to why I was referred to your office. I had issues about my workplace (in particular, what to do when a co-worker harasses you) and I wanted to discuss with somebody the reasons why I was leaving PSPC. When I was referred to your office, I wondered whether the person who referred me to you thought I was the one having mental health issues. Later, after talking with André, I understood why the Office wants to ensure the mental health and well-being of PSPC employees, and is willing to take steps to help employees and their co-workers promote an environment focusing on good mental health and well-being. »

2.6 OBSERVATIONS: What the data tell us

The results of the surveys to be conducted by the Office and the mental health performance measurement tool will help to more effectively identify personal and organizational risk factors that may cause or exacerbate psychological problems, as well as provide a more accurate environmental analysis of mental health deficiencies in the workplace.

The following information deals with psychological health and safety in PSPC workplaces and is based on the most recent data.


I am very happy to know that we have a very senior advocate for mental health in PSPC to augment existing support services [. . .] I am interested to know that someone is looking not only at the mental health of individuals in the department, but the mental healthiness of the department itself as a corporate culture.

Results of 2017 PSES

PSPC had a response rate of 63% for the 2017 PSES, which is slightly higher than the response rate for the public service as a whole (61%).

According to these results, a greater number of employees trust their managers (57% in the 2017 PSES and 55% in the 2014 PSES) and are confident that senior management will address the issues raised in the survey (55% in the 2017 PSES and 48% in the 2014 PSES). In that regard, PSPC results are 5 percentage points higher than the average results for the public service. Trust between employers, managers and executives is vitally important for the creation of psychologically safe work environments.

Psychological support and organizational culture

A large percentage (84%) of respondents felt that their immediate supervisor was creating an environment wherein they could discuss matters affecting their well-being at work.

But only 47% of respondents feel they can initiate a formal recourse process without fear of reprisals.

Creating a positive work environment where team members can speak freely without fear of reprisals or judgments, can contribute to a psychologically healthy workplace.

Civility and respect and psychological protection from harassment

83% of respondents felt that they were being treated with respect in their work unit.

That said, based on the 2017 PSES results for PSPC and the Ombudsman's observations through his confidential meetings, multiple employees continue to be dissatisfied on the harassment front.

In total, 16% of respondents said that they had been the victim of harassment in the workplace mostly by people in authority, by colleagues and, to a lesser extent, by individuals from other departments or agencies and by members of the public. Of these 16%, 57% of respondents said they had been the target of offensive remarks; 41% reported being a victim of aggressive behavior; while 44% said they had been excluded or ignored. Signs of uncivil behaviour are still present.

Ongoing attention is required to tackle this issue

Leadership and clearly defined expectations

A total of 80% of PSPC employees said that they were satisfied with the quality of supervision they received, and 78% of respondents thought that their immediate supervisor kept them informed of issues affecting their work. Although these findings are positive, there are still concerns about the quality of deliverables owing to continually changing priorities, as highlighted by 41% of respondents in 2017. 21% of respondents also of respondents said that the lack of clearly defined expectations was causing them stress at work.

Results from the 2017 survey also showed a slight improvement in the communication of key information to employees by senior management (53% in 2017 versus 50% in 2014) and in effective and timely decision-making by senior management (49% in 2017 versus 45% in 2014).

Workload management and work-life balance

The results of the 2017 PSES shed some light on these two major psychosocial risk factors. While 34% of respondents said that there are not enough employees to do the work, 30% of respondents said that a heavy workload was causing them stress at work. Furthermore, 43% of respondents felt that the quality of their work was suffering because they had to do the same amount of work, or more, with fewer resources.

2017 APEX survey on the work and health of executives

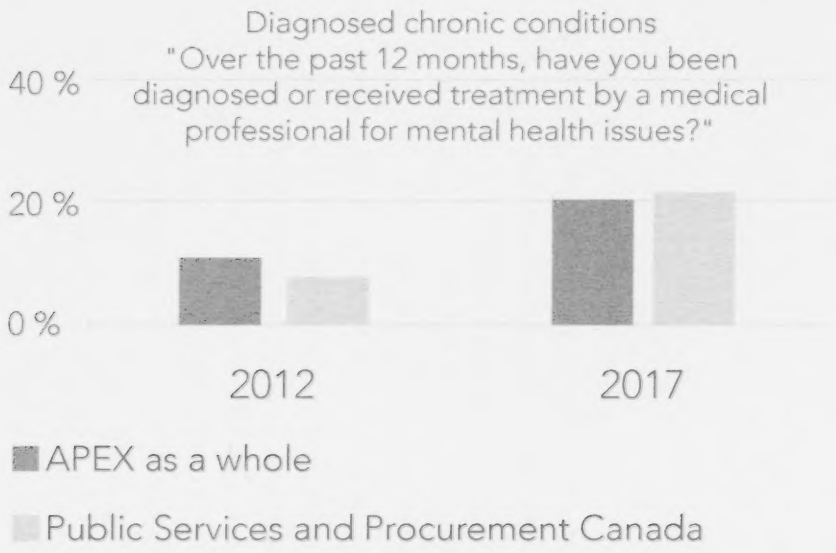
Every five years, the Association of Professional Executives of the Public Service of Canada (APEX) conducts a survey on the work and health of executives.

More than half (55%) of PSPC executives who responded to the survey said that their mental health was "excellent" or "very good," while 16% said "average" or "poor." The results for the public service as a whole are similar to those for PSPC.

Also, in 2017, 22% of PSPC executives said that they had been treated by a health care professional for mental health issues or been diagnosed with a mental health issue in the 12 months preceding the survey (see graph below).

In 2012, this number was at 8%, which is 14 percentage points lower than in 2017. There is a similar trend in the results for executives in the APEX survey as a whole. With regard to overall APEX results, the rate of diagnosed chronic conditions increased by 10 percentage points in 2017, compared with the rate reported in 2012, and by 15 percentage points, when compared with the rate reported in 2007

With respect to incivility, 23% of PSPC executives said that their supervisor had criticized them or had been condescending in some way (25% for APEX as a whole), 36% of respondents said that they had been criticized by their peers (26% for APEX as a whole), and 26% of respondents said that they had been spoken to inappropriately in public or in private (17% for APEX as a whole).


Diagnosed chronic conditions
"Over the past 12 months, have you been diagnosed or received treatment by a medical professional for mental health issues?"
40 %
20 %
0 %
2012
2017
APEX as a whole
Public Services and Procurement Canada

SICK LEAVE UPDATE

Data from SunLife Financial - PSPC unionized employees

The graph on the right, provided by Sun Life Financial, provides a breakdown of long-term disability benefit applications in four diagnosis categories. Mental issues are the basis for the majority of applications approved in the last four years, as shown in the graph.

Total number of applications approved by SunLife Financial				
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
147	**165**	**157**	**126**	**167**

Total number of applications approved citing mental health disorders, by diagnosis by SunLife Financial per year				
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
90	**98**	**110**	**72**	**106**

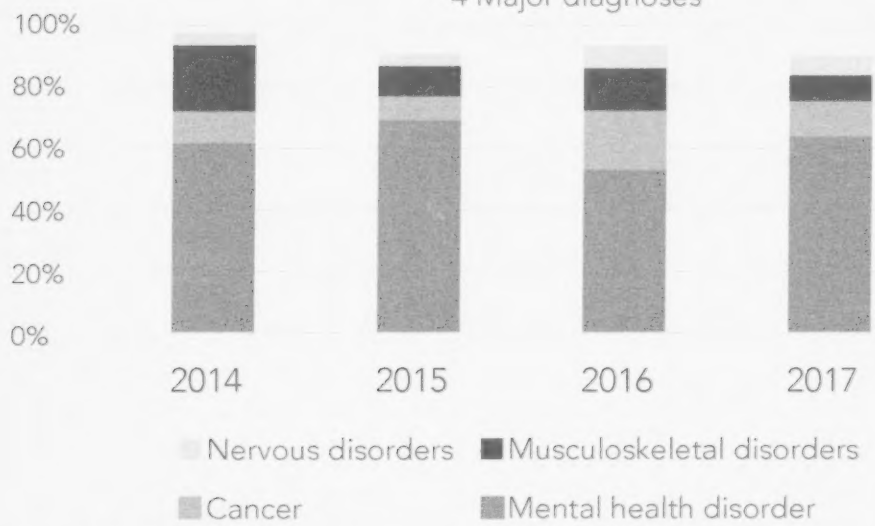
For example, applications received in 2016 could have been rejected or suspended because of missing information and approved in 2017. The same goes for other years.

At PSPC, the number of applications submitted citing mental health disorders represented 63.5% of all applications approved in 2017.

This number peaked at approximately 70% in 2015. For comparison purposes, for federal organizations under the same insurance plan, the number of applications citing mental disorders submitted to the same insurance plan was approximately 50% between 2013 and 2017. A more in-depth analysis will be required to understand this situation and identify trends.

Breakdown of approved applications

* 4 Major diagnoses



*It should be noted that the data per year must not be considered as cohorts.

Industrial Alliance data - PSPC non-unionized executives and employees

The data provided by Industrial Alliance show a trend similar to that observed in the data provided by Sun Life Financial with regard to the number of applications related to diagnosed mental health disorders.

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total number of applications approved by the Industrial Alliance			**123**	**123**
Number of applications approved citing mental disorders	**64**	**60**	**72**	**78**

MyGCHR data – Sick leave for PSPC employees[10]

According to MyGCHR data, the number of days of sick leave remained about the same from 2014–2015 to 2016–2017. In 2017-2018, the number slightly decreased.

	Number of sick days with a medical certificate	Number of sick days without a medical certificate	Total number of sick days
2014–2015 FY	**4,5**	**7,4**	**11,9**
2015–2016 FY	**4,5**	**7,5**	**12**
2016–2017 FY	**4**	**7,1**	**11,1**
2017–2018 FY	**3.76**	**6.37**	**10,1**

Best practice

When an employee is on sick leave for more than 10 consecutive workdays, it is important to inform the Disability Management Program as soon as possible to ensure early intervention and a successful return to work. It would also be useful for managers to attend information sessions delivered by this Program.

[10] PeopleSoft 9.1 is designed to handle all administrative transactions related to human resources.

31 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 REVIEW OF THE FIRST RECOMMENDATIONS

In his first report, the Ombudsman set out **eight recommendations** to ensure and protect the mental health of PSPC employees. The recommendations fell into three categories: leadership, work environment, and training and recognition.

After approving these recommendations, the Deputy Minister asked the Human Resources Branch to draw up an action plan (see Appendix A).

Some recommendations require time to implement, but despite the fact that only six months have passed since the first report,[11] concrete actions have been taken, such as the following:

- the design of the leadership course on emotional intelligence in the workplace for PSPC managers;
- the creation of the mental health award of excellence;
- the launch of a survey to more effectively identify mental health training needs; and
- various actions to provide better support for Pay Centre employees.

That said, the Ombudsman recommends timely communications with employees regarding progress achieved in implementing the recommendations.

REVIEW OF PAY CENTRE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE IN SEPTEMBER 2017

Further to a week-long visit to the Pay Centre (the Centre) in May 2017, the Ombudsman recommended setting up a multidisciplinary support team that would be assigned to the Centre and would provide support in the following areas:

1. **Internal procedures,** ensuring that resources are allocated to developing consistent procedures for processing transactions;
2. **Internal communications,** to better communicate information to staff about the Centre's many activities and to more effectively coordinate consultations with employees; and;
3. **Well-being programs,** providing employees with support in workshops on stress management, disability management, accommodation, etc.

These recommendations have since been incorporated into the Centre's action plan.

[11] More time is required to implement some of the recommendations for improvements, including improving recruitment, professional development and management assessment practices, assessing psychological risk profiles, centralizing exit interviews, and assessing the impact of transformation projects on employees' mental health.

Response from the Pay Centre's senior management to the Ombudsman's three recommendations

The Centre has made great strides in the past year to build a culture that promotes employee wellness and engagement.

Various initiatives have been implemented to assess and improve employees' working conditions. Specifically, since late spring 2017, the Business Expertise Unit has reviewed and simplified procedures commonly used by employees responsible for pay operations. These procedures and updates are available to all employees in the Miramichi Toolbox. In addition, the Unit works closely with the Compensation Sector in the National Capital Region to ensure that the Centre provides accurate and timely information to employees. Extensive training and information sessions are offered on a regular basis. Centre staff have also developed a number of tools to provide employees with support in their work (calculators, dynamic checklists and the client analysis dashboard tool).

Senior management regularly disseminates information on new developments to all Centre employees. This Centre-wide communication is well-received by employees. They are pleased with the number of activities planned by the social committee and the fact that mental health is included in discussions.

Efforts made to promote work-life balance have been noted. Employees have recognized the opportunity to work a compressed work week or to telework. However, it was noted that access to telework is not always fair and that the management process should be reviewed.

In August 2017, a new team was set up to focus on advancing employee engagement, internal communications and human resources management initiatives, including learning. Since its inception, the team has sent information to employees, including a weekly newsletter on behalf of the Director General's Office. The team has offered and continues to offer employees a number of workshops on stress management, mental health in the workplace, meditation, yoga, and other activities. Initiatives include greater access to on-site employee assistance services, a dedicated disability management resource person, leadership development programs, and employee focus groups.

The Centre's management also acknowledges that more coaches are required and that the initial approach of limiting the number of coaches is no longer appropriate. Employees feel they are heard and welcome this willingness to adjust.

3.2 BEST PRACTICES

It should be noted that many best practices adopted by and for employees help significantly to bring about the desired culture change. The following are some examples of noteworthy practices:

- Mindfulness Matters Movement

  The Mindfulness Matters Movement was created at a meeting of three Real Property employees in the National Capital Region who were originally intended to discuss work-related issues, but whose conversation shifted to mindfulness and how to live and work in the present moment. Since then, every Monday morning, an increasing number of PSPC employees meet for 30 minutes for a short meditation session, to discuss the topic of the day and to make a commitment to practise mindfulness throughout the day by letting themselves be guided by selected sayings, such as "seeing the good in others." The Mindfulness Matters Movement aims to improve the workplace by promoting compassion towards oneself and caring for oneself, leading to resilience and meaningful connections.

Launch of Mindfulness Matters Movement on October 16, 2017

- The Listening Ear

  The Workplace Well-being Directorate team piloted a peer support program within the National Capital Region. Peer helpers are employee volunteers who are able to provide support objectively and believe that anyone going through a difficult time should receive help in the workplace. Peer helpers have not necessarily had mental health issues. Their role is to listen to co-workers dealing with problems in their personal or work life, and to provide them with information or refer them to professionals. Four-day training sessions were given to peer helpers, as well as bimonthly group update meetings, each lasting one or two hours. Successful candidates were also interviewed to ensure they had the required skills.

- Contract with family services for Sydney employees

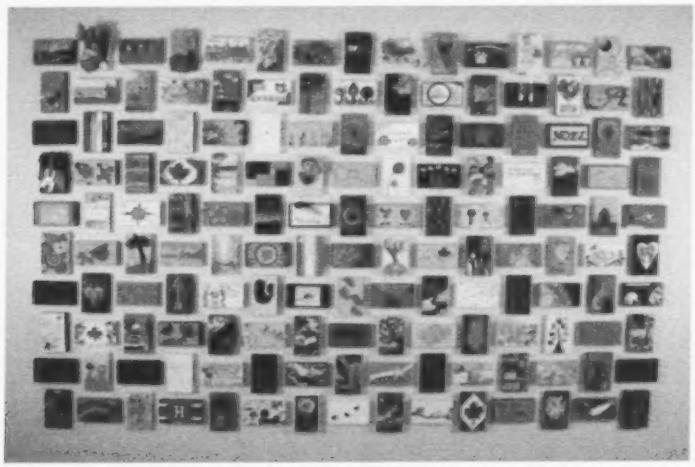
  To complement the services offered by the Employee Assistance Program in the Atlantic Region, the Regional Director of Cape Breton operations, along with a Program advisor, entered into a contract with family services in Sydney to reduce the wait time to see a psychologist or psychiatrist in some remote areas, which can take up to a year. Under this contract, employees and their families can have six sessions with a counsellor holding a Master's degree and an appointment within five days following the first call.

Mental health is a core concern of the Pension Centre committees

At the Pension Centre, a number of active and dynamic committees and programs have been set up over the years. The committees have had a positive impact on employees.

The Wellness Committee encourages employees to improve their lifestyles by promoting wellness in the workplace. "Live, work, play . . ., be well!" is its motto.

The Creative Committee is about encouraging and celebrating the creativity, positive energy and mental health of all employees through artistic projects and the healing power of nature. It was suggested to the Creative Committee that the Pension Centre reception area be made more welcoming. This inviting and welcoming space now has three temporary or permanent areas to display employee art projects as well as a collaborative area for Pension Centre committee projects focusing on employees, including the "Expressions" project. The elevator area is now adorned with 150 beautiful wooden pieces as well as a commemorative plaque.

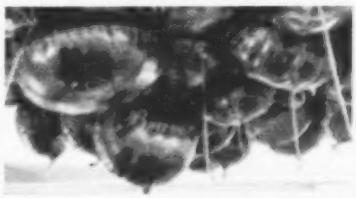


The Canada 150 wall at the Pension Centre in Shediac, New Brunswick

The Employee Engagement Committee seeks to promote a culture of co-operation, teamwork and innovation in the delivery of the Centre's services.

The Social Committee provides employees with opportunities to interact with co-workers in a social setting, get to know each other and celebrate achievements while having fun.

The Recognition Program raises employees' awareness of the importance of recognizing people and their work, ideas and achievements. Whether it's an official recognition event, an award ceremony or an informal event with balloons, any opportunity to recognize someone's work is a good opportunity.



The "bravo" balloons float proudly at the Pension Centre.

Wellness Wednesdays at the Integrated Services Branch

The Wellness Wednesday held by the Integrated Services Branch (ISB) on February 7, 2018, was the first day devoted entirely to wellness within the Branch. This day was an opportunity for employees to learn about a variety of initiatives related to health and wellness, including mental health. Several guests facilitated interactive sessions where employees learned to do yoga in a 2.0 work environment, prepare healthy snacks, etc. An open group discussion on mental health was also held.

Definition of stress factors in the workplace

A professional and technical services team in the Atlantic Region, where many transformations were underway, decided to identify stress factors in their workplace that they could do something about. The management team consulted employees, union representatives and several information sources, including PSES results and the Ombudsman's first report. A plan was developed for the five broad action areas identified in order to get to the root of the problem and develop a strategy or implement stress mitigation measures. This is a best practice that the Office encourages.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Translation Bureau compiled the Workplace Mental Health Glossary, which supports one of the components of the Government of Canada's mandate that consists in educating managers and employees on mental health issues in the workplace. The glossary provides terminology data in both official languages for **337 concepts as well as definitions and explanatory notes**. While intended mainly for translators and writers, the glossary can also serve as a reference tool for anyone seeking a better understanding of mental health in the workplace.

3.3 NEW RECOMMENDATIONS

In this annual report, the Ombudsman sets out three new recommendations based on his observations and wishes expressed by employees across the country.

1. **In collaboration with employees, within branches and regions, develop tools promoting civility and respect in the workplace**

In order to create a civil, respectful, dynamic and safe workplace, the Ombudsman recommends that branches and regions develop tools promoting civility in the workplace and that employees be involved in their development.

There are a number of note-worthy tools in the Department such the compass created in Montreal under the Workplace Renewal Initiative. This tool aims to provide guidance with respect to desired behaviours in a collaborative work space built on mutual trust.

Another example is the **mental health commitment** made by Finance and Administration Branch (FAB) employees. Under the terms of this commitment, employees listen without judging, set an example, create a supportive environment, help those in need and use positive encouraging language. The commitment has been communicated to FAB staff in the National Capital Region and will soon be sent to the regions.

There is also a six-part Civility Charter with a list of civil and uncivil behaviours which was drawn up and approved by the former Integrated Services Branch senior management. This initiative resulted in a reference tool that employees can use to create a civil environment where employees can feel **heard, supported, valued and, above all, respected**. The Civility Charter serves as the basis for the culture the employees wish to see. A working group made up of employees representing each sector of the branch was set up to discuss the implementation of the Civility Charter. Lastly, the office of the Ombudsman for Mental Health has put together a list of their core values (see **Appendix D**) which is provided as an example only.

Copy of the mental health commitment signed by the Corporate Accommodation and Material Management Group, FAB

ISB CIVILITY CHARTER

The key elements as well as the behaviors noted below were developed and agreed to by the ISB Senior Management Team as a tool to instill a culture of civility within ISB. As noted in the paper entitled '*Civility Matters! An evidence –based review on how to cultivate a respectful federal Public Service*', the author Craig Dowden outlines the positive impacts of fostering a civil environment. These include a workforce that experiences a higher degree of motivation, higher job satisfaction, higher performance and more commitment.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
KEY ELEMENTS / VALUES	Having and maintaining a positive attitude	Having Respect for • The Organization • Others • Self	Collaborating with others to deliver on commitments, agreements and promises	Engaging others by: • Listening • Acting • Owning	Forgiving	Showing gratitude

ON TRACK BEHAVIORS	Communicate decisions positively
	• Don't say no right away
	• Assume the best
	• Walk the talk
		• Being in the moment
		  • Avoid distractions including blackberries, telephone and laptops
		  • Adapt to others
		  • Arriving on time
		• React quickly to off track behaviors
		• Deal with breakdowns or difficult conversations
			• Asking for input/feedback and really considering the information being provided
			• Giving credit were it is due by acknowledging it
			• Look for positive intent of others
				• Understanding what we both need
				• Making yourself available (for example by having an open door policy and being visible)
				• Being accountable by taking responsibility for what was said and for actions
				• Celebrate both small and large successes
					• Own what you do
					• Act on what you promised
					• Saying 'sorry'
					• Accepting that mistakes are made
					• Allowing mistakes to be fixed
					• Accepting that nobody is perfect starting with ourselves
						• Being satisfied with the ordinary
						• Recognizing people for actions taken
						• Being appreciative of 'little things' that are done (i.e. door held open,.)
						• Saying 'thank you'

OFF TRACK BEHAVIORS	• Not listening to what the person is saying • Saying « No » right away and without considering information presented	• Looking at blackberry and answering the telephone when having a conversation or meetings • Not taking the time to understand • Talking behind someone's back • Ignoring off track behavior	• Having non-verbal behaviors that are negative (i.e. rolling eyes) • Demeaning the ideas presented	• Coming to the table with pre-set ideas and decisions • Lack of openness to new ideas and perspectives • Talking over people	• Not doing what you promised you would do • Holding a grudge	• Never being satisfied

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Canada

https://gcdocs.gc.ca/tpsgc-pwgsc/llisapi.dll/link/109082970

2. **Through mechanisms available to the Department, consider introducing a clause, or alternate means, allowing employees to report inappropriate, harassing or aggressive behaviour by co-workers, clients, partners or suppliers.**

This recommendation was included in this report after many employees reported having been treated disrespectfully and bullied by PSPC clients or suppliers. Because PSPC is, first and foremost, a department providing services to other federal departments and agencies and dealing on a daily basis with hundreds and even thousands of stakeholders, PSPC employees want to provide the best possible service. Asking for a basic degree of civility in return is reasonable, and the right to be treated with courtesy should be recognized and protected.

3. **Systematically provide the On-boarding and Orientation Program for New Employees and Students throughout the Department and include the "psychological health" component in the mandatory occupational health and safety course**

Providing an on-boarding and orientation program is a best practice for any employer of choice. By properly equipping new employees, we ensure that we not only welcome and support them, but also inform them of the many tools, programs and services that the Department makes available to them. With respect to mental health, it is important at the outset to inform them of expected behaviours and services available to them. The many meetings held throughout PSPC revealed that the provision of on-boarding and orientation programs is inconsistent.

Mandatory mental health training could be part of the on-boarding and orientation program. The current program includes 10 training activities, most of which are mandatory. In order to create a positive work environment that encourages employees to seek help and break the silence, basic mental health training is needed from the moment the employee is on-boarded. This training could, for example, be one component of the mandatory occupational health and safety course and also part of the online training given for the purposes of the risk prevention program. It would also be appropriate for the training to provide information on the resources available to employees to identify the changes occurring at home and appropriate actions to take, particularly in a context where work-life balance continues to be encouraged and where flexible work arrangements (compressed work weeks, telework, mobility agreement, etc.) are increasingly accepted.

4 THE OFFICE PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

4.1 COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

The Office adopted various communication strategies to promote its activities, foster open dialogue on mental health issues in the workplace, and share information with experienced partners both within and outside the public service. To foster a cultural change around mental health, ongoing communication is vitally important. To that end, the Office used traditional and social media, various tools provided by the Government of Canada, and promotional tools. The Ombudsman also made numerous presentations.

TRADITIONAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Articles have been published about the Office, and numerous departmental newsletters and messages have been posted on PSPC's various social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn).

In addition, the Office's intranet site, particularly the Resources on Mental Health section, was frequently updated.

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TOOLS

The Office also used the collaborative tools **GCpedia** and **GCintranet** to communicate more effectively information on mental health resources and tools as well as information on the Office activities to fellow public service employees.

A **GCconnex** group was also set up, mainly for PSPC employees.

With this group, the Office intends to:

- Promote the Ombudsman's role and messages to employees, through the use of a blog, in order to continue reducing the stigmatization associated with mental health, avoid injuries, and foster dialogue;
- Promote available mental health resources;
- Give employees a voice so that they can tell their stories and share their experiences;
- Recognize inspiring people at PSPC by entering their names on the honour roll (see Section 4.5);
- Disseminate information on mental health best practices; and
- Seek ideas and suggestions to improve PSPC workplaces.

AWARENESS TOOLS

The Office also developed tools for employees: pocket guides and posters on mental health.

The set of pocket guides lists important internal and external programs and resources available to PSPC employees in each region. The fanfold format of the guides makes them easy to print and keep handy at all times. It is a practical tool that managers can distribute to their team members to initiate discussion and express support for maintaining good mental health.

To help create safe spaces where employees can openly discuss mental health issues, posters have also been designed. They list the same resources

as the pocket guides, but can be installed in prominent places frequented by employees, such as meeting rooms, kitchen bulletin boards, etc.

From the very beginning, Pat the whale has been the Office's mascot. Sitting on the Ombudsman's desk, Pat the whale reminds us of the importance of providing a safe place to discuss mental health.

The inspiring people highlighted on the Ombudsman for Mental Health's honour roll will also receive a Pat the whale stress reliever for their actions in supporting mental health.

PRESENTATIONS

Throughout the year, the Ombudsman gave numerous presentations to various groups of PSPC employees, and to employees elsewhere in the public service:

WITHIN PSPC

- **87** presentations to senior management committees, management committees, town halls, departmental network meetings and numerous committees across PSPC.
- Participated in **2** group discussions, one organized by the Canada Post Corporation Review Secretariat and the other by Vanguard: PSPC's Young Professionals Network.

OUTSIDE PSPC

- **22** consultations with federal ombudsman offices, mental health partners and other federal departments and agencies that wanted to know more about the Office (e.g., Canada School of Public Service; Environment and Climate Change Canada; Shared Services Canada; Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada; and Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency).
- Webcast organized by the Canada School of Public Service with the participation of the PSPC Ombudsman for Mental Health, the National Health and Safety Officer of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, and the Director of Workforce Management and Health at Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. The discussion focused on the topics of harassment and violence in the workplace and the conditions that foster respectful labour relations and a climate of trust.
- Presentations:
  - to APEX members;
  - to the **British Columbia Federal Council;**
  - to the **British Columbia innovation fair;**
  - to the conference organized by the **Conference Board of Canada** and entitled Mental Health in the Capital 2018 (in English only);
  - to the **Government of Canada Mental Health Champions Committee;** and
  - at the ***EXecuTALK*** activity organized by the Canada School of Public Service, where the Ombudsman will discuss harassment as part of a short webinar for the senior managers' community.

4.2 PARTNERSHIPS

1. UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

There is continuing collaboration with the University of Ottawa as part of a study on disclosing mental issues in the workplace to identify best practices that could be implemented by senior management, managers, employees and human resources. The objectives of these best practices would be to:

- Reduce the stigmatization of people with mental health issues in the workplace;
- Increase employees' propensity to disclose their mental health issues in the workplace; and
- Maximize the potential results of such disclosure.

The research team determined how study collaborators can help recruit study participants and disseminate study findings afterwards.

PSPC employees will be invited to participate in the study on a voluntary and anonymous basis, and the Office will ensure that information is shared with employees when it becomes available.

2. DR. CYNTHIA MATHIEU

The Office has established a partnership with Dr. Cynthia Mathieu, an organizational behaviour specialist, to develop a series of mental health surveys (see Section 4.4)

Dr. Mathieu is a professor at the University of Quebec in Trois Rivières, where she teaches courses on leadership and personality traits in the workplace, employee selection, and mental and organizational health, and acts as a consultant to organizations.

The survey questionnaires will help the Office gather additional information on the mental and organizational health of PSPC workplaces, by branch and region, while maintaining confidentiality.

The Office has signed a letter of agreement with Dr. Mathieu, which provides for her collaboration at no charge to develop survey questionnaires. In return, the generic findings from the survey results may help Dr. Mathieu conduct further research into psychological distress in the workplace. The survey results will be confidential and will not identify individuals or groups under any circumstances. The Office is committed to protecting confidentiality and providing a safe space.

3. EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CANADA

A collaborative arrangement has also been set up with the Labour Program of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), which is developing leading occupational health and safety indicators, including psychological well-being in the workplace. ESDC's Labour Program is working with the Office to develop questions for the Office's surveys. This collaboration is an opportunity to not only meet PSPC's objectives, but also to advance the Labour Program research into leading indicators. ESDC is the federal regulator responsible for implementing the Canada Labour Code and related regulations. The survey questionnaires, results and lessons learned can be used by the Labour Program and possibly by other federal departments and agencies and external national organizations.

4. GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE OF THE CANADIAN INNOVATION CENTRE FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

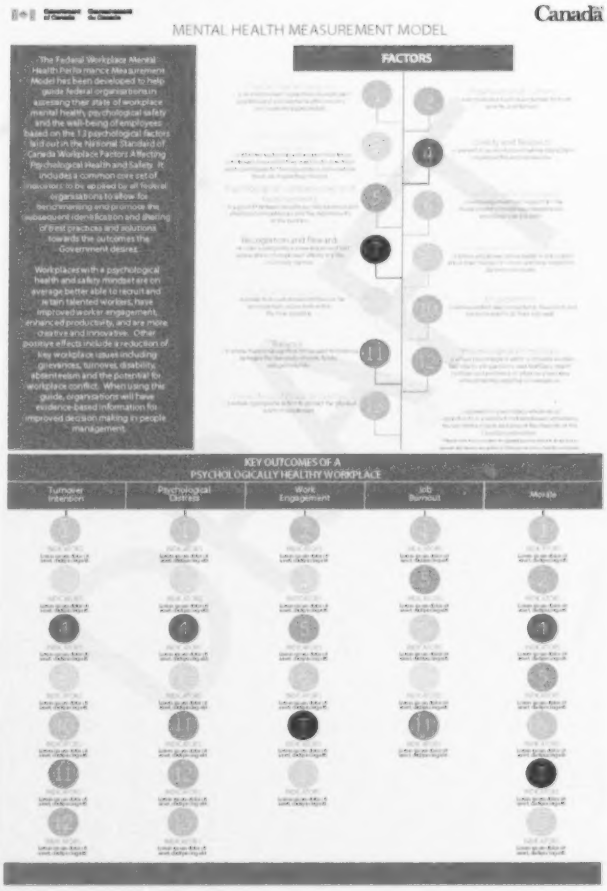
PSPC's Ombudsman for Mental Health sits on the Governance Committee of the Canadian Innovation Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace, which was established in March 2017 by the Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development. The Centre officially opened in May 2018. It is a place where employees can participate in workshops facilitated by mental health and wellness experts and a safe and respectful forum for discussions, networking and collaboration. The Centre also plans to host government-wide events to eliminate stigmatization, raise awareness and promote cultural change.

4.3 MENTAL HEALTH PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT TOOL

The Office of the Ombudsman for Mental Health developed a dashboard to better understand the overall psychological health situation in the Department's workplaces. Discussions with officials in other departments and agencies revealed that they were working on the development of their own dashboards and performance indicators related to mental health. It was therefore only natural that those departments should work together to develop a federal public service dashboard that departments and agencies could then use to assess mental health in their workplaces consistently.

The Office has taken the initiative to organize meetings with federal organizations considered leaders in mental health performance measurement, such as the Treasury Board Secretariat, the Department of National Defence, Employment and Social Development Canada, the Department of Justice, PSPC, Shared Services Canada and Statistics Canada. The Office also invited union representatives to the meetings.

To date, the interdepartmental working group has developed a draft mental health performance measurement model for the federal public service, the first of its kind in the government. This model or tool is intended to help federal departments and agencies assess the state of psychological health in their workplaces based on the 13 psychosocial factors outlined in the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace. The tool also includes a set of common core outcomes and indicators (currently under review) to help organizations develop a more accurate picture of psychological health in their workplaces (see diagram to the right).



This model could serve as a government-wide reference tool and facilitate the definition of best practices and solutions in support of government priorities. Broader consultations are planned in order to test a measurement tool for the federal public service. This tool will be available for use during 2018-2019.

4.4 MENTAL HEALTH SURVEYS

At a time when PSPC no longer plans to conduct pulse checks, which will be replaced by the Treasury Board Secretariat's Public Service Employee Annual Survey (PSEAS), the surveys conducted by the Office will be used to gather important data on the mental health of PSPC employees, by region, branch, directorate and sector, particularly the following:

- The organizational culture and sub-cultures that promote or hinder mental health and well being in the workplace;
- The health of interpersonal relationships in the workplace, including those with managers, co-workers and employees;
- The impact of behaviours on mental health and well-being in the workplace;
- The impact of departmental transformation initiatives on mental health and well-being in the workplace; and
- The extent to which the organization is leading by example.

In addition to the partnership with Dr. Cynthia Mathieu, a number of internal and external stakeholders have been consulted, including, but not limited to the colleagues from the public opinion research team and the Human Resources Branch at PSPC as well as survey experts from Statistics Canada.

While previous work has most often focused on areas where employees have reported workplace conflicts, the approach taken in the Office's surveys is integrated and long-term. In 2018–2019, the Office plans to conduct an online survey every four months.

The survey results are designed to be used in conjunction with other tools, such as federal employee surveys, confidential meetings conducted by the Ombudsman and the mental health performance measurement tool.

The first survey is expected to be launched in the fall of 2018.

4.5 INSPIRING PEOPLE HONOUR ROLL

From "leadership honour roll" to "inspiring people honour roll"

In his first report, the Ombudsman for Mental Health made a commitment to develop a leadership honour roll to promote best practices by showcasing positive examples of supervisors, managers and executives whose behaviour or success is inspiring.

This commitment remains and has been improved. To recognize that psychological health and safety in the workplace is everyone's business, the Office is replacing what was originally intended to be a leadership honour roll with an **Inspiring People Honour Roll**. While management plays a crucial role in protecting mental health in the workplace, employees at all levels can, through their actions and words, help create a psychologically healthy environment. The very essence of leadership is the way a person behaves with others, regardless of his or her group and level.

The **Inspiring People Honour Roll** is a means of recognizing those who have a positive impact, large or small, on maintaining good mental health in the workplace. These people may have increased employees' awareness of mental health issues, demonstrated listening skills, compassion or empathy, provided advice or referred an employee to available resources. In brief, these are people who put human beings at the heart of everything they do.

The Office is proud to launch its honour roll with an outstanding person who left a lasting impression on the people with whom she worked: Carol Lampropoulos. Prior to her untimely passing, Carol was a trainer and coach at the Public Service Pay Centre. Her commitment to creating a safe space for discussion about mental health was reflected in all her training certifications, and, most importantly, in her everyday actions.

HONOUR ROLL
INSPIRING PEOPLE
Carol "Can Do!"
Carol Lampropoulos was there the day the Pay Centre opened. "We've got this!", she said to her doubtful colleagues. A few years later, when Phoenix rolled out, Carol rolled up her sleeves and got to work learning a system that often changed. Carol's team knew they could come to her with their questions, frustration and fears and that they would be met with kindness, compassion and good humour.
Carol was taken from us too soon, but her impact on the mental health of the Pay Centre remains.

All inspiring people will be showcased on the Office's GCconnex page.

4.6 INTERDEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATIONAL OMBUDSMEN COMMITTEE

In addition to the PSPC Ombudsman for Mental Health, there are seven ombudsmen serving federal public service employees at Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Parks Canada, Canadian Heritage, Health Canada and the Treasury Board Secretariat.

These ombudsmen are generally responsible for delivering programs or services, such as the Employee Assistance Program, the Office of Workplace Conflict Management program, the values and ethics program, and so on. At PSPC, these programs fall under the Human Resources Branch. Despite this difference in mandate, the PSPC Ombudsman for Mental Health adheres to the same operating framework as the other organizational ombudsmen.

In December 2017, the ombudsmen met and agreed to establish an official network, which became the Departmental Organizational Ombudsmen Committee. For the first year, the committee is managed by PSPC Office of the Ombudsman for Mental Health.

The objectives of the Committee are as follows:

- Act as an advisory and support officer for federal organizations with an organizational ombudsman;
- Keep abreast of developments in each member's files;
- Take advantage of and share best organizational practices; and
- Provide advice and guidance to central agencies on developing new policies, procedures and guidelines or on amending current ones.

The ombudsmen also wish to provide support for departments and agencies that would like to create ombudsman positions within their own organizations.

5 | CONCLUSION

5.1 2018–2019 OFFICE PRIORITIES

During the 2018–2019 fiscal year, the Ombudsman will continue making regional visits (see Section 2.2, Regional visits) and giving presentations, but most of all, he will continue meeting with PSPC employees.

Also, projects conducted by the Office (see Section 4, Office Projects and Activities) will continue, and employees will be given regular updates on the status of the projects.

5.2 CLOSING REMARKS

While management is responsible for ensuring that workplaces are healthy and safe, employee involvement is essential to achieving a positive culture that prevents stigmatization, lack of civility and respect, harassment and disrespectful behaviour. For employees to play an active role, open communication and engagement are equally important.

Employees know the reality of their work environment, and its ups and downs. It is important to gather their stories and seek their opinions in order to better understand the issues and obstacles they face on a daily basis, give them a means to express themselves, and listen to them and act appropriately. This is also one of the lessons learned from the Goss Gilroy report further to the Goss Gilroy study on the management and implementation of the Transformation of Pay Administration Initiative.

PSPC MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY HRB ACTION PLAN 2017 – 2020

Promoting well-being and mental health at work by supporting employees is a priority at Public Services and Procurement Canada's (PSPC). As a result, PSPC developed a Mental Health Strategy that helps bring into reality our departmental mental health vision. This action plan responds to recommendations of the first report of the Office of the Ombudsman for Mental Health.

LEADERSHIP

Improve recruitment, development and evaluation practices for supervisors, managers and executives, with a focus on people management

ACTIONS

Points 1 and 2
Review the Leadership and Management Excellence Development Framework at PSPC, in accordance with the recommendation.

Point 3
Break in the existing process for executives before extending the ongoing evaluation mechanism to all employees with supervisory duties.

Point 4
Objective 1 under the Culture goal of the Department's Mental Health Strategy targets this recommendation.

Executive Services
1,2,3

Each assistant deputy minister based on the action plans for implementing the Department's Mental Health Strategy
4

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Conduct exit interviews systematically

ACTIONS

Point 1
Complete an analysis of the rate of participation to the current process, review the questions and identify possible improvements.
Set a target.
Evaluate the progress made on a quarterly or biannual basis.

Point 2
Given the implementation of the Department's Mental Health Strategy and the various indicators identified, this recommendation should be reviewed one year after the strategy's implementation.

HR OPS

Assess the impact of departmental transformation projects on employees' mental health

ACTIONS

Objective 4 under the Culture goal of the Department's Mental Health Strategy targets this recommendation.

Mental Health Strategy Working Group

Conduct a psychological risk profile evaluation

ACTIONS

Point 1
Identify all high risk positions that are most susceptible to psychological hazards. Update these profiles, validate the prevention measures in place and make any necessary adjustments.
Once the high risk positions have been reviewed, conduct the same exercise for lower risk positions.

Point 2
Develop an information mechanism as part of the recruitment process.
Review job descriptions to ensure physical and psychological health and safety components are expanded on.

Point 3
Objective 2 under the Building capacity goal of the Department's Mental Health Strategy targets this recommendation.

The OHS Team in collaboration with Well-Being, the National Working Group on Mental Health, the HR Ops and Executive Services team

Appoint regional well-being coordinators

ACTIONS

Each region must complete its own analysis and based on the existing data, evaluate needs based on organizational capacity.
Determine the service offer.

Regional Directors

Set up a multidisciplinary support team for the Miramichi Pay Centre

ACTIONS

The Pay Administration Branch put a team in place in the summer of 2017.

Pay Administration Branch

TRAINING AND RECOGNITION

Provide mental health training to employees, particularly to management

ACTIONS

Point 1
Objectives 1 and 2 under the building capacity goal of the Department's Mental Health Strategy target this recommendation.

Point 2
The Workplace Well-Being Directorate will inventory the list of all available resources and will propose a strategy to centralize tools under its existing services, thereby promoting access for employees.

Well-being Team

Introduce the Deputy Minister's Award of Excellence for Mental Health

ACTIONS

Consult with the Mental Health Strategy Working Group to develop the eligibility criteria.
Update the program and obtain the required approval.

HRB

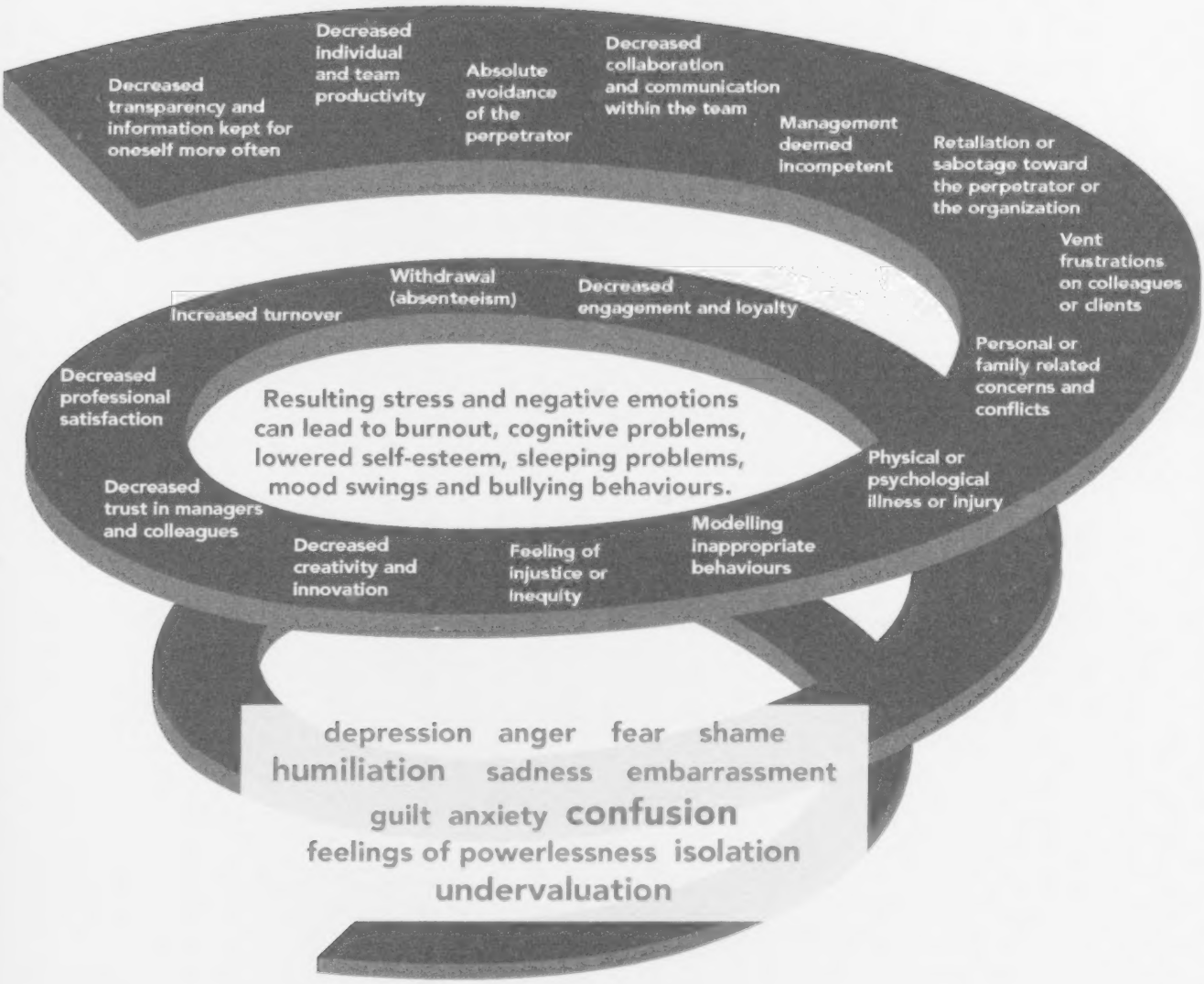
"Vision: Create a culture that enshrines psychological health, safety and well-being in all aspects of the workplace through collaboration, inclusivity and respect."

http://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/PSPC_Well-Being#Office_of_PSPC_Mental_Health_Ombudsman

PSPC MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY
CULTURE
EMPLOYEES ARE EMPOWERED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE CREATION OF A HEALTHY, INCLUSIVE AND INNOVATIVE WORKPLACE
Number of Performance Agreements that include Mental Health/Healthy workplace objectives
My department or agency does a good job of raising awareness of mental health in the workplace
In my work unit, individuals behave in a respectful manner
I am encouraged to be innovative or to take initiative in my work
PSPC EMPLOYEES FEEL COMFORTABLE RAISING MENTAL HEALTH QUESTIONS
I would describe my workplace as being psychologically healthy
My immediate supervisor creates an environment where I feel free to discuss matters of well-being at work
I feel I can initiate a formal recourse process (grievance, complaint, appeal) without fear of reprisal
PSPC EMPLOYEES FEEL COMFORTABLE ACCESSING AVAILABLE SERVICES AND RESOURCES
Number of individual and confidential meetings held with the Ombudsman for Mental Health
Number of Human Resources Branch services provided by:
1. Values and Ethics
2. Office of Workplace Conflict Management
3. Employee and Organization Assistance Program (EOAP)
4. Disability Management Team
5. Career & Leadership
6. Harassment Coordinator
7. Labour Relations
8. Other
MENTAL HEALTH IS INTEGRATED IN DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITIES
Number of branch/regional activities in support of this outcome
Number of branch/regional level mental health working groups
Alternative work arrangements – number of agreements in place
Number of departmental initiatives / activities related to mental health
MANAGERS SUPPORT PSPC EMPLOYEES TO SUCCEED AT WORK
Percent of employees who report that PSPC is respectful
Percent of employees reporting that they have experienced harassment or discrimination
Percent of employees reporting that they have been accommodated
Employees reporting high levels of workplace stress
THE VISION
Public Services and Procurement Canada and its unions commit to the shared vision that we will create a culture that enshrines psychological health, safety and well-being in all aspects of the workplace through collaboration, inclusivity and respect. This obligation belongs to every individual in the workplace
GOAL 1 - CULTURE
To create an organizational culture in PSPC where the attainment of positive mental health of its employees is openly promoted, supported and respected and where mental illness in its various forms is de-stigmatized.
GOAL 2 – CAPACITY-BUILDING
To ensure all employees (including management) are better equipped to address mental health challenges and promote a healthy, supportive workplace.
CAPACITY-BUILDING
ALL MANAGERS ARE TRAINED TO CREATE A HEALTHY WORKPLACE
Percentage of managers who have attended mental health awareness training:
1. Joint Learning Program
2. PSPC Mental Health Workshops
3. Mental Health First Aid
4. Other
Number of managers who have participated in development or training to foster mental health:
1. Participated in coaching circles
2. Self-care workshops on resilience, work-life balance, mindfulness, etc.
3. Attended collaborative conversations workshops
4. Attended leadership or management workshops
5. Other
ALL EMPLOYEES HAVE ACCESS TO TRAINING AND TOOLS
Percentage of employees who have attended mental health training:
1. PSPC Mental Health Workshops
2. Joint Learning Program
3. Mental Health First Aid
4. Self-care workshops on resilience, work-life balance, mindfulness, etc.
5. Other
Number of branch/regional activities in support of this outcome
Number of articles published in "In the Know" and number of hits on pages
RESOURCES ARE INVESTED TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY
Budget and time allocated to:
1. Departmental mental health activities
2. Promotion of mental health
3. Branch and regional activities related to mental health
4. Ombudsman Office
Canada

https://gcdocs.gc.ca/tpsgc-pwgsc/llisapi.dll?func=ll&objaction=overview&objid=104279016

APPENDIX C – IMPACT OF UNCIVIL BEHAVIOUR ON PEOPLE AND ON THE ORGANIZATION[11]


Decreased transparency and information kept for oneself more often
Decreased individual and team productivity
Absolute avoidance of the perpetrator
Decreased collaboration and communication within the team
Management deemed incompetent
Retaliation or sabotage toward the perpetrator or the organization
Vent frustrations on colleagues or clients
Personal or family related concerns and conflicts
Physical or psychological illness or injury
Modelling inappropriate behaviours
Feeling of injustice or inequity
Decreased creativity and innovation
Decreased trust in managers and colleagues
Decreased professional satisfaction
Increased turnover
Withdrawal (absenteeism)
Decreased engagement and loyalty
Resulting stress and negative emotions can lead to burnout, cognitive problems, lowered self-esteem, sleeping problems, mood swings and bullying behaviours.
depression anger fear shame
humiliation sadness embarrassment
guilt anxiety confusion
feelings of powerlessness isolation
undervaluation

[11] See the bibliography at the end of the report for the complete list of documentary sources consulted to develop the diagram.

APPENDIX D – THE CORE VALUES OF THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN FOR MENTAL HEALTH

« TOGETHER, WE CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS AND AFFECT REAL CHANGE. »

Ensure confidentiality

We recognize that the nature of our work requires us to be discrete and maintain confidentiality.

Care, share and be fair

We are thoughtful, civil and helpful to those around us. We recognize the rights of all individuals to mutual respect and accept others without biases based on differences of any kind.

Contribute to a positive team spirit

Work is a team sport; each of us has an important role to play. We call on each other's strengths and act collectively. Attitude is contagious. We spread excitement and hope to those around us.

Embrace research and development and innovation, learn, share and celebrate achievements

We partner with knowledge workers and embrace cutting-edge research. We support innovation by making room for creativity. Sometimes we win. Sometimes we learn. We improve and persevere.

Embrace open communication

We have open, honest and respectful conversations to have a better understanding of each other and our responsibilities. We seek feedback. It will only make us better.

Act with a sense of ownership

We all contribute to the workplace, and we are accountable for doing what we commit to doing. "The standard you walk past is the standard you accept," Lieutenant General David Morrison, Chief of Army.

Embrace work-life balance

We recognize that flexible working arrangements may help balance work, personal and family needs.

Respect the mandate

We continuously ask ourselves whether new ideas add value to the organization and whether someone else is better positioned to take them on.

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